General Assembly

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Agenda item 49

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/64/L.15/Rev.1 and Add.1)*]

64/81. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling its resolutions 56/6 of 9 November 2001, on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, 57/6 of 4 November 2002, on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010, 57/337 of 3 July 2003, on the prevention of armed conflict, 58/128 of 19 December 2003, on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation, 59/23 of 11 November 2004, on the promotion of interreligious dialogue, 61/17 of 20 November 2006, on the International Year of Reconciliation, 2009, 62/155 of 18 December 2007, on human rights and cultural diversity, 63/113 of 5 December 2008, on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010, and 63/181 of 18 December 2008, on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief,

Recalling also its resolution 63/22 of 13 November 2008, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, and the leading role played by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the preparations for the celebration of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, in 2010,

Bearing in mind the valuable contribution that dialogue among civilizations can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

Noting that interreligious and intercultural dialogue has made significant contributions to mutual understanding, the promotion of a culture of peace and

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

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tolerance and an improvement of overall relations among people from different cultural and religious backgrounds and among nations,

Recognizing that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are sources of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind,

Noting the various initiatives at the national, regional and international levels for enhancing dialogue, understanding and cooperation among religions, cultures and civilizations,[2] which are all mutually reinforcing and interrelated,

Noting also the commemoration of the International Year of Reconciliation, 2009,[3]

Encouraging activities aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue in order to enhance social stability, respect for diversity, and mutual respect in diverse communities, and create, at the global level, and also at the regional, national and local levels, an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding,

Noting with appreciation the decision taken in resolution 47, adopted on 23 October 2009 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its thirty-fifth session, to approve the preliminary action plan for the celebration of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, in 2010,[4]

Affirming the importance of sustaining the process of engaging all stakeholders in the interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue within the appropriate initiatives at the various levels,

Recognizing the commitment of all religions to peace,

1. *Affirms* that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace;[5]

3. *Notes* the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on interreligious dialogue in the context of its efforts to promote dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, as well as activities related to a culture of peace, and welcomes its focus on concrete action at the global, regional and subregional levels;

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[2] Third Global Inter-Media Dialogue, Bali, Indonesia, 7 and 8 May 2008; World Conference on Dialogue, Madrid, 16–18 July 2008; Third Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, Astana, 1 and 2 July 2009, with the participation and technical assistance of the United Nations system; Fifth Asia-Europe Meeting Interfaith Dialogue, Seoul, 23–25 September 2009; Seventh Rhodes Forum, "Dialogue of Civilizations", Rhodes, Greece, 8–12 October 2009; Fifth Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue, Perth, Australia, 28–30 October 2009; Parliament of the World's Religions, Melbourne, Australia, from 3 to 9 December 2009; Third Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 27 to 29 May 2010; and Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development, to be held in Manila in 2010.

[3] See resolution 61/17.

[4] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-fifth Session, Paris, 6–23 October 2009*, vol. 1 and corrigenda: *Resolutions*.

[5] A/64/325.

4. *Reaffirms* the solemn commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for, and observance and protection of, all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] and other instruments relating to human rights and international law, the universal nature of these rights and freedoms being beyond question;

5. *Encourages* the promotion of dialogue among the media from all cultures and civilizations, emphasizes that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, and reaffirms that the exercise of this right carries with it special duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall be only such as are provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals;[6]

6. *Encourages* Member States to consider, as and where appropriate, initiatives that identify areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation, inter alia, the ideas suggested during the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, held on 4 and 5 October 2007, including the idea of an enhanced process of dialogue among world religions;

7. *Takes note* of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace, held on 25 September 2009 in New York;

8. *Supports* the proposal of the President of the General Assembly to hold, at its sixty-fourth session, an informal thematic debate on dialogue among civilizations;[7]

9. *Urges* Member States, in the context of the International Year of Reconciliation, 2009, to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure durable peace and sustained development, including through reconciliatory measures and acts of service and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals;

10. *Encourages* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as the lead agency for the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, to promote the action plan for the celebration of the Year, and encourages Member States and all organizations and institutions, including civil society organizations, working to promote the rapprochement of cultures to join in the celebration of the Year in order to demonstrate their firm commitment to intercultural dialogue, including interreligious dialogue;

11. *Invites* the Secretary-General to organize, within existing resources, a special activity to launch the celebration of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which could include the ringing of the peace bell;

12. *Recognizes* that the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat plays a valuable role as focal point within the Secretariat on the issue, and encourages it to continue to interact and coordinate with the relevant entities of the

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[6] See article 19, paras. 2 and 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex).

[7] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fourth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 41st meeting (A/64/PV.41), and corrigendum.

United Nations system and coordinate their contribution to the intergovernmental process;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution and, at its sixty-sixth session, in coordination with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to further solicit views of Member States on the possibility of proclaiming a United Nations decade for interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation for peace, building on the information contained in the reports of the Secretary-General at the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions and the relevant initiatives to be taken in the course of 2010.

60th plenary meeting
7 December 2009